

WELLINGTON (SOMERSET)
URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Annual Report

FOR 1907

BY DR. J. MEREDITH,

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

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Annual Report for 1907

By DR. J. MEREDITH,

Medical Officer of Health.

To the Chairman of the Council of the Wellington
(Somerset) Urban Sanitary District.

6th February, 1908.

SIR,—I have the honour to submit, for the information of the Council, my annual report respecting the sanitary condition and the health of the inhabitants of the district for the year 1907.

Population, etc.—The population according to the 1891 Census equalled 6808 ; 1901, 7283 ; estimated to June 30th, 1907, 7602. The number of inhabited houses 1901 Census, 1687. Average number of persons to each house in parish, 4·238. Since the date of the last Census 17 old houses have been destroyed and 98 new houses built and occupied ; average number of persons to these houses, 4·02.

Geology.—The geological formation of the district has been fully given in former reports and there is nothing fresh to add.

Occupations.—The occupations of the people and the general industry of the place remain, and there is no material change. Employment has been steady and uninterrupted and no distress or exceptional poverty has been experienced.

Water Supply.—The Water Supply of the town has been ample and of excellent quality. The Urban Council's chief difficulty has been that which occurred owing to faulty water pipes and taps, causing inordinate waste of water. Two wells in the town area were found to be seriously polluted and the water in them affecting health injuriously.

On representations being made to the owners these sources of supply were discontinued and replaced by the town water.

A well in the rural part of the district became seriously polluted by soakage from a small and very dirty farmyard—many yards distant and seriously affected the health of those drinking therefrom. After a good deal of work and expense the quality of the water was much improved and deemed passable, and although it occasionally changed colour after heavy showers of rain ; it was free from sewage pollution.

A second district well was found much polluted owing to insufficient guarding on the surface and around the mouth, and the drinking of this well water had, like the other, produced illness. As soon as attention was directed to the state of things, measures were immediately taken to rectify the complaint.

Sewage Works.—The Surveyor reports that—“The Sewage Works have now been treating the whole of the sewage of the town and Rockwell Green for 18 months and have given entire satisfaction, although only one half is as yet completed. As described in a previous report the works are in duplicate, and the reason that only one half has been in work is on account of the difficulty of getting together the medium for the filtering beds. All structural works have been completed for some time.”

The Sanitary Engineer—Mr. Lomax—employed by the Urban Council in the construction of the sewage works, inspected the place on December 18th, accompanied by members of the Council, and reported that—“The works were in good working order and entirely free from any sort of nuisance.”

The following report regarding the nature of the effluent made by Mr. J. Carter Bell, County Analyst (Manchester), speaks for itself:—

Sample taken January 10th, 1908.

Results are expressed in grains per gallon.

Appearance in tube — yellowish and slightly cloudy.

Smell when heated to 100 degrees Fahr.....	Nil.
Total solid matter at 212 ,, 	54 0
Total mineral ,, at 356 ,, 	52.0
Loss.....	2
Chlorine in Chlorides.....	5
Nitrogen in Nitrates	1.1
Free Ammonia.....	.16
Albuminoid Ammonia07

Oxygen absorbed.

3 mins. at 60 degrees Fahr..... .15

4 hours at 60 ,, 25

Alkalinity calculated as free lime..... Nil.

Microscopical examination of deposit.....Organic

Suspended matterTraces

General remarks.—I consider this to be a first class effluent and fit to run into any stream or river.

J. CARTER BELL, Jan. 14, 1908.

The Surveyor further reports that—“Two new sewers of nine-inch glazed socket pipes have been constructed in order to supply a want to outlying districts, aggregating a length of 1,033 yards.”

“Thirty new houses have been erected during the year, of which 25 have been of the artisan class.”

Scavenging.—All the scavenging arrangements and actions have been carried on as in former years and have been generally satisfactory.

Inspections.—The district was regularly inspected during last year and in the same manner as during former periods. Attention was drawn to defects and irregularities wherever noticed.

Some cases of nuisance likely to affect health injuriously came under notice, such as accumulation of manure at unsuitable sites, keeping pigs in dirty styres and in contravention of the Byelaws, and permitting unreasonable accumulation of house refuse. In every case the matters complained of were rectified on the attention of those in default being directed to them.

There were 26 instances where the sanitary inspector served notice on persons for having defective and choked drains causing nuisance.

Bakeries.—The different bakehouses in the district were inspected by the Sanitary Inspector and myself and they were all found in a satisfactory and cleanly condition.

Slaughter Houses.—We visited the slaughter houses and found them all in a satisfactory condition.

Dairies, Cowsheds, and Milkshops.—The dairies, cowsheds, and milkshops have been regularly inspected by the Inspector, but nothing of importance has called for attention with the exception of a little whitewashing. There are 14 dairies, 15 cowsheds, and 3 milkshops. Cows are very little kept in cowsheds, only by night and then only during a short portion of the winter months.

Schools.—The elementary public schools of the district have been visited at frequent intervals, and the scholars looked at, and the sanitary conditions of the premises noted.

There was an epidemic of measles in the district during the latter part of the spring and June, and it became necessary to advise closing the schools for different periods. The epidemic proved of a comparatively mild character, which will be apparent when it is noticed that there were only two deaths—and these of children under the school age—in the whole district.

Factories and Workshops.—The report submitted last year respecting factories, workshops, and work-places, applies to the state of these places during the year now under review. There is nothing fresh to add. I personally visited a large number of houses where out-work is carried on and had information regarding the others. In all the condition of things was in every way satisfactory.

Infectious Diseases.—Nine cases of infectious diseases under the Notification Act were reported. There were no deaths among the number. Five of them were diphtheria, two erysipelas, one scarlet fever, and one enteric fever.

I inspected the premises where these cases occurred. In all the cases of diphtheria some insanitary element was observed, *e.g.*, impure water, ill-ventilated dwellings, etc. In only one instance did two occur in the same house. The others were unconnected with one another. The enteric case may be taken as an object lesson. In front of the child's (aged 4) home was a street gully. The check-water in this gully evaporated during the then dry weather and sewer air escaped through. The child played near the gully, but the fact that sewer air was escaping from it was not noticed until the child became ill. Accidents of this kind are not infrequent during a continuance of dry weather.

Births.—There have been 134 births during the year—128 legitimate and six illegitimate. Eighteen legitimate died during the year and one illegitimate. The infant mortality was heavy, being equal to 148·8 per 1,000 births.

Deaths.—There were 104 deaths among the residents of the district during last year. Nineteen of these were under one year of age, 9 one year and under five, 2 five years and under fifteen, 5 fifteen years and under twenty-five; 32 were between 25 and 65 years, and 37 were over 65 years.

Seventeen persons died in the public institutions of the district, eight of these not belonging to the district, and one other died in a private house in the town, who had only been residing in the district a few days, making nine non-residents in all.

The causes of death call for no special remarks. As stated, two young children succumbed to measles, and there were four deaths of infants whose death was stated to be premature. Three deaths were due to accident and one to suicide.

Disinfection.—The question of having a disinfecter, or constructing a disinfecting chamber, with arrangements for a bath, has been under consideration, but no definite resolution has, as yet, been arrived at. At the same time it is admitted that such things would be an advantage.

Rainfall.—The rainfall during the year amounted to 31·22 inches—about two inches more than in the previous year.

Vagrants.—The number of vagrants relieved amounted to 1,609, viz., 1,426 males, 133 females, and 50 children. This is less than half the number who were relieved in 1906.

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Wellington Rural District Council.

Milverton, Somerset.

CHARLES RANDOLPH,
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

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